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## Escalation Process

The Escalation Process is used to ensure critical items are raised soon enough to prevent impacts or embarrassments to the project, and to ensure the appropriate parties are informed and involved in critical decision making. The project should always strive to make decisions and address issues at the lowest possible level, however when a resolution cannot be made, the items should be escalated to ensure a decision is made before it can cause project impacts.

All contracts, whether Interagency Agreements, Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), or vendor contracts, should contain or reference an escalation process. The project's Governance Plan, Master Project Plan/Project Management Plan, Risk Management Plan, and Issue Resolution Plan/Process also should contain or refer to a common escalation process.

The following information should be described in an escalation process.

- What items are subject to the escalation process?
  - For instance, critical issues or all issues; design decisions; contract disputes; deliverable acceptance disputes; invoice disputes; etc.
  - Provide examples of what would be a candidate for escalation and what would not be a candidate for escalation.
- The levels of escalation and the participants in each level.
  - For instance
    - Level 1: Project Managers and/or Contract Managers
    - Level 2: Department Directors and/or Vendor Executive, Legal
    - Level 3: Agency Secretary and Vendor Senior Executives
  - More than three levels of escalation is usually discouraged
  - The group must convene and discuss the issue within the pre-defined timeframe, or must escalate the item to the next level
- Who has the final decision?
  - Usually the highest level representation; in our case the Agency Secretary
- What is the required timeframes between escalation levels?
  - Must be commensurate with the item being escalated and the impact to the project if the item is not resolved
  - Five to 10 days is typical depending on the criticality of the item. More than two weeks is discouraged.

## Samples, Supporting Materials and References

- [CWS/CMS Interagency Agreement](#) (pdf)

- [CalWIN Quality Assurance Process](#) (pdf)